9

days until the survey changes

The Risk-Based Survey goes live nationwide September 8, 2026.

Not every nursing home gets the same survey anymore.

CMS is splitting the standard recertification survey in two. Most facilities keep the full Long-Term Care Survey Process.

A small group gets something shorter.

THE NUMBER

12%

of nursing homes nationwide are expected to qualify, by CMS estimate.

Roughly 1,560 facilities out of more than 14,600.

This is a resource decision.

2015

The last year the federal nursing home survey budget was increased.

20%+

Increase in state agencies' obligation to conduct complaint surveys since then.

CMS is moving survey hours away from lower-risk buildings toward higher-risk ones and a backlog of unsurveyed homes.

WHAT THE RBS LOOKS LIKE

Half the time. Fewer surveyors.

A streamlined review of all required areas with fewer activities, and a smaller resident sample.

Tested since 2023 across 22 states and more than 100 facilities. CMS reports findings comparable to the traditional survey.

You need five stars. Overall.

A less-than-5-star overall rating is the single most common reason facilities do not qualify, affecting more than 11,600 of them.

Second most common: a health inspection score above the 50th percentile in your state.

ELEVEN WAYS TO MISS

Any one of these disqualifies a facility from the quarterly list.

1. Overall rating under 5 stars
2. Staffing rating under 3 stars
3. Actual harm, IJ, or substandard quality of care last cycle
4. More than 18 months without a standard survey
5. Any staffing waiver in effect
6. Failed Payroll-Based Journal audit
7. Failed MDS audit
8. Health inspection score above the state's 50th percentile
9. Two or more residents 65+ coded schizophrenia after admission
10. Change of ownership since last standard survey
11. Special Focus Facility candidate

You can lose it before the surveyor walks in.

Facilities stay eligible for six months, but the state must reverify first. An IJ-triaged intake, an abuse citation at any level, more than three pending non-IJ intakes at medium or higher, a nursing waiver, or a change of ownership converts it back to a full survey.

States can also choose the full survey anyway.

THIS ONE IS PUBLIC

A trophy icon on Care Compare.

CMS will mark qualifying facilities on their Nursing Home Care Compare profile page, and the qualifying list goes public September 30, 2026.

Surveys conducted as RBS will be identified on the CMS-2567 and in the public data files.

Quality just became visible to consumers in a new way.

For about 12% of facilities, strong performance now buys a shorter survey and a public marker.

For everyone else, nothing changes on the survey itself. What changes is that the gap is now labeled.

Source: CMS memorandum QSO-26-14-NH, July 16, 2026.